

Community Engagement Committee

Skagit Watershed Council Aug 30th, 2022, 9:30 am – 11:30 am, [Zoom link](#)

Draft Minutes

Present: Holli Watne (Skagit Watershed Council), Melissa Ciesielski (Swinomish Indian Tribal Community), Cindy Pierce (Skagit Conservation District), Pete Haase (SMRC+), Chakong “Cha” Thao (Skagit County Public Works), Lucy DeGrace (SFEG), Christine Longdon (Skagit Conservation Education Alliance)

(Action items are in ***Bold**)

1. We approved the June and July 2022 notes
2. Roundtable of updates
 - a. The Skagit River Salmon Festival will be tabling at the MV Farmers Market on Saturday, Sept 10th. It’s not too late to have your flyers or other media included in the 100 bags of goodies they’ll be given away. Please contact Scottie at the Skagit Watershed Office Tues-Thursday if you have something you’d like to include.
 - b. The 9th annual Illuminight Winter Walk will take place on Jan 27th, 2023. Conservation organizations can get involved by either hosting a window display, tabling at the event, and/or creating luminaries for the procession. This will be the first in-person Illuminight event that includes a procession since January of 2019!
 - c. Pete will be working with the Salish Sea School to teach about forage fish again this fall.
 - d. The National Estuarine Research Reserve system will be hosting their annual meeting at Padilla Bay this fall. Some publicly-available educational opportunities will be part of this.
 - e. SFEG has hired two AmeriCorps intern. Kenzie will be doing education and will likely join future meetings. Lucy is looking to hire 2 unpaid student interns for fall work. One will lead the salmon spawner surveys. Their planting season starts in mid-October. More info here:
<https://www.skagitfisheries.org/events/>

- f. The Lincoln Theatre is hosting a free poetry workshop that centers around Salmon on 9/3. More info here: <https://lincolnthatre.org/poet-rena-priest>
- g. The Department of Ecology has recently published resources to encourage voluntary public action to cool waters in critical salmon habitat in tributaries of the lower Skagit River. ***Please share these resources!**
- i. Blog: <https://ecology.wa.gov/Skagit-waters-blog>
 - ii. Story map: <https://ecology.wa.gov/Skagit-waters>
 - iii. Video #1 - Keeping Skagit Valley wild and cool: The impact of warm streams
<https://youtu.be/ki4WXIzn00A>
 - iv. Video #2 - Keeping Skagit Valley wild and cool: How to keep streams cool
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-m-TuY94yU>
 - v. Video #3 - Keeping Skagit Valley wild and cool: Landowner stories and solutions
<https://youtu.be/XDXbKYTGg0A>
 - vi. Video #4 - Keeping Skagit Valley wild and cool: How farmers are helping
<https://youtu.be/IMsoS3ZZJwo>
- h. [There was a recent fire on the Tommy Thompson Trail.](#)
- i. Skagit Conservation District is getting ready to start the new season of Skagit Stream Team. Cindy would like help promoting this. ***Please share the SCD posts!** Cindy is also working on getting flyers approved by school districts about her watershed model lesson.
- j. SCEA updates:
- i. They're planning a Watershed Art and Discover Day event on October 22nd at Padilla Bay. **They are still looking for folks to run tables with art projects.**
 - ii. They will also be at Taylor Shellfish Farm at the upcoming Festival of Family Farms (the weekend of October 1st).
 - iii. They are planning another EcoNet meeting for November.

iv. The Watershed Letterbox Trail will be up in the Upland Trail of Padilla Bay until early October. They've already had over 100 youth submit forms for completing the trail.

This is a huge improvement compared to responses during COVID. Skagit Kid Insider has been very helpful in promotion.

k. Introducing Melissa Ciesielski. She is the new Environmental Education Outreach Specialist for the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community. She has only been on board for about 2 months and is mostly focusing on learning to prioritize the different aspects of her work. Most the programs focus on the reservation of the near-by community – but they are wanting to do some work beyond. Here is what the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community is working on:

- i. Between Two Worlds Indigenous Science Program for La Conner High School
- ii. Climate Change Workshop Series. There is talk of a possible Climate Change Symposium with tribal leaders toward the end of the year. Some aspects may be open to the public.
- iii. Outreach events like the Fidalgo Bay Day
- iv. Writing monthly articles in the tribal magazine, [QYUUQS](#)
- v. More here: <https://swinomish-nsn.gov/resources/environmental-protection/outreach-environmental-education.aspx>

l. Also introducing Cha Thao from Skagit County Public Works. He was asked to join today's meeting on behalf of the County, though he does not focus on Outreach and Education (O&E). The county is planning on hiring an O&E position in Natural Resources soon and he is scouting to see if the CEC would be a good fit for this the person who takes the job. Here are some Skagit Programs that are currently going on:

- i. Pollution Identification & Correction (PIC) Program – aimed at livestock operators and septic owners
 1. They use <https://poopsmart.org/> to communicate messaging: This site was created out of a social marketing project and has been more successful.

2. <https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/PublicWorksCleanWater/cleansamish.htm>. Originally, PIC was focused only on Samish Bay. It is now expanded to include other watersheds, like Padilla Bay. There is work in progress to update this site.

ii. [Big Lake campaign to reduce fertilizer use](#). Involves free soil samples and education about when to fertilize. This is a community based social marketing project.

iii. Contracting with SCD and cities for stormwater permits

iv. Doing tabling events and Spanish outreach when possible

v. Salmon habitat restoration projects, etc

3. Quick debrief of Fidalgo Bay Day

a. Estimate of 300 participants. Over 200 cars in parking lot. A lot of young families a lot of diversity of folks.

b. Holli noticed a lot of folks from out of county were there. It was suggested that many of these were folks may have been families RV camping on site.

c. The event was advertised through Skagit Kids Insider, newspaper, clam digger, flyers

d. Things that went well – lots of activities for kids to do. Art tables were a huge hit.

e. Everyone who was there said they had a good time and would do it again

4. STEAM Train discussion

a. Holli recently spoke with Jenny Veltri, Director of NW WA STEM Network, about promotion of our K-12 programs. Here are some highlights from the conversation:

i. Right now, they are not directly promoting school programs from outside organizations on [their webpage](#). However, they will promote teacher resources like trainings and grants on this page.

ii. She'd be happy to share our class programs and teacher resource list on their Facebook page. She'd also promote science-based events, such as the Fidalgo Bay Day.

- b.** Holli also spoke with Brian MacNevin, Science Coordinator for NWESD 189 at this meeting. Here is what he had to say:
- i.** All organizations have struggled to get teachers participation last year. Teachers have been stretched more than usual.
 - ii.** The best way to get our content into more teachers' hands would be to host a teacher training for STEM clock hours. Brain would be happy to help us set this up. Here's some more information about that: <https://www.k12.wa.us/educator-support/continuing-education-clock-hours/stem-clock-hours>
 - iii.** It's hard to say when a good time to host a teacher training would be, but there are definite bad times. These include early August, September, mid-November, Mid-to-late December. Jan-March are ok times for K-8 but can be difficult for HS level. Spring break works well for some teachers, but others are unwilling take classes at that time.
 - iv.** Brain will be happy to pass along our teacher resource sheet once it's completed.
 - v.** He can also help promote programs and events via the ESD Facebook page.
 - vi.** The ESD has investigated creating a webpage to list opportunities for teachers, similar to what we have discussed. They ultimately tossed out the idea because they knew they wouldn't have the manhours needed to keep it up to date.
- c.** We reviewed "K-12 Environmental/STEAM Resources in the Skagit Watershed" list (henceforth referred to as the "K-12 Resources list") and made a few edits. SCEA mentioned that they would like to be on the document, but don't currently know what school programs they can promote. Holli hopes to send out the final draft soon.
- d.** Discussion about creating a webpage to list our resources:
- i.** We generally agree that a webpage with filterable fields would likely be more user-friendly than the K-12 Resources list

- ii. Who would create/maintain this webpage? It was suggested that SCEA and SWC could be the main keepers of this (with others in the CEC having editing privileges too), though neither currently has it in their budget.
 - iii. Christine estimates that creating a good website with a filterable search engine would cost at least \$3000 to set up. Maintaining webpage and content would be substantial additional costs. Currently both nonprofits do not have available funds to create something like this.
 - iv. Christine suggested using a free Google Page to share a list of our programs with hyperlinks to webpages with more information on these.
 - 1. This would make it harder for folks to find what they're looking for, but at least they could use Control+F to "find" key words.
 - 2. This option would save us a lot compared to setting up a paid page, but is still far from free.
 - a. It will still take hours to create the content and regular time to update. As a reference, Holli says she spends 5-10 hours every month just putting content in the SWC's [Public Calendar](#).
 - b. It will not have easy access unless we could pay for a snappy domain name for the page.
 - e. The University of WA has put in a grant to hire STEM coordinators ("teacher leaders") from each school who goes to training and given resources to work with outside organizations, like those in the CEC. They are already working with the schools. If they get the grant, the program should go into effect in the 2023/2024 school year. Christine is working with the group from UW and has told them to get in contact with Holli.
5. Hannah Liss put together a presentation and resources list about Puget Sound Partnership's work for the CEC. ***We should review this and be prepared to discuss it at the next meeting:**

6. ***Discussion Tabled until next meeting:** Do we want to continue doing hybrid meetings?

Next meeting: Sept 27th